



His Majesties  
MOST GRACIOUS  
SPEECH  
To both HOUSES of

PARLIAMENT,

On Friday the Third Day of December, 1697.

**A** Message from His Majesty by Sir Fleetwood Shepherd, Gentleman-Usher of the Black Rod.

Mr. Speaker,

The King Commands this Honourable House to Attend Him immediately in the House of Peers.

Accordingly Mr. Speaker, and the House, went up to Attend His Majesty; And being Returned.

Mr. Speaker Reported, that His Majesty had been pleased to make a most Gracious Speech to both Houses; And that by reason of the great Noise, and Lowness of His Majesty's Speech, (to prevent Mistakes) he had Desired and Obtained a Copy thereof, which he Read to the House, and is as follows.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

**T**He War, which I entered into by the Advice of my People, is, by the Blessing of God, and their Zealous and Affectionat Assistance, brought to the End We all Proposed, an Honourable Peace; which I was willing to Conclude, not so much to ease My Self from any Trouble or Hazard, as to Free the Kingdom from the Continuing Burden of an Expensive War.

I am heartily Sorry My Subjects will not at first find all that Relief from the Peace, which I could Wish, and they may Expect; but the Fonds intended for the last Years Service have fallen short of answering the Summs for which they were given; so that there remain considerable Deficiencies to be provided for.

There

There is a Debt upon Account of the Fleet and the Army.

The Revenues of the Crown have been Anticipated, by My Consent, for Publick Uses, so that I am wholly Destitute of Means to Support the Civil List, and I can never distrust you will suffer this to turn to My Disadvantage, but will provide for Me during My Life, in such a Manner as may be for My Honour, and for the Honour of the Government.

Our Naval Force Being Increased to near Double what it was at My Accession to the Crown, the Charge of Maintaining it will be proportionably Augmented: And it is certainly Necessary for the Interest and Reputation of England, to have always a great Strength at Sea.

The Circumstances of Affairs Abroad are such, That I think My self obliged to tell you My Opinion, That for the present England cannot be Safe without a Land Force. And, I hope, We shall not give those that Mean Us Ill, the Opportunity of Effecting that, under the Notion of a Peace, which they could not bring to pass by a War.

I doubt not but you Gentlemen, of the House of Commons, will take these Particulars into your Consideration, in such a Manner, as to provide the necessary Supplies which I do very Earnestly recommend to you.

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

That which I most delight to Think of, and am best pleased to owne. is That I have all the Proofs of My Peoples Affection that a Prince can desire: And I take this Occasion to give them the most solemn Assurance, that as I never had, so I never will, nor can have any Interest separate from theirs.

I esteem it on of the Greatest Advantages of the Peace, that I shall now have Leisure to Rectifie such Corruptions or abuses, as may have crept into any part of the Administration, during the War, and effectually to discourage Prophaneness and Immorality. And I shall imploy My Thoughts in Promoting Trade, and Advancing the Happiness and Flourishing Estate of the Kingdom.

I shall Conclude with telling you, That as I have, with the Hazard of every thing, Rescued your Religion, Laws, and Liberties, when they were in the Extremest Danger, so I shall place the Glory of My Reign, in Preserving them Entire, and Leaving them so to Posterity.

**F I N I S**

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